

## VA TAP – Technology Assessment WATCH – October 2003

This new monthly E-mail newsletter, produced by the **VA Technology Assessment Program (VATAP)**, introduces you to health technology assessment (HTA) in VA and links to evidence-based resources for VA decision makers -

**news you can use!** We welcome your comments! [<mailto:elaine.alligood@med.va.gov>](mailto:elaine.alligood@med.va.gov)

The **VA TAP** produces evidence-based systematic reviews of the medical literature in response to requests for policy or clinical guidance sent through the Chief Officer of Patient Care Services. These reports address the use of health care technologies (such as any device, process, drug, or therapeutic intervention) in the veteran population. For more information about us, access to all our publications, and links to HTA resources around the world, check out the VATAP websites: <http://www.va.gov/vatap> <http://vaww.va.gov/vatap>

### Recent HTA Reports From VATAP

Two recent VA TAP reports assessed vision related topics:

**Optical Devices for Adults with Low Vision: a Systematic Review of Published Studies of Effectiveness** [<http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs\\_vision.htm>](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs_vision.htm).

And a companion **patient information piece**

[<http://www.va.gov/vatap/patientinfo/lowvision.htm>](http://www.va.gov/vatap/patientinfo/lowvision.htm)

**Visual Field Testing in Compensation and Pension Examinations**

[<http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/visualfield.PDF>](http://www.va.gov/vatap/pubs/visualfield.PDF)

And a companion **patient information piece**

[<http://www.va.gov/vatap/patientinfo/visualfield.htm>](http://www.va.gov/vatap/patientinfo/visualfield.htm)

### Recent HTA Reports From Around the Globe

#### **How Effective are Mental Health Services?**

The NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York, in the UK analyzed a number of recent high quality systematic reviews of the effectiveness of mental health services to address the variations in mental health services in England. Attached is a link to a one-page summary:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/report21.htm>

#### **How Effective are Laxatives?**

The NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at the University of York summarized the evidence on the effectiveness and costs of laxatives in the prevention and treatment of constipation in a predominately elderly population. This is a ubiquitous health problem particularly among VA elderly veterans. Attached is a link to the full PDF:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/ehc71.pdf>

**Check Out these web sites for news & information you can use:**

**The U.S. National Guideline Clearinghouse** [<http://www.guidelines.gov/>](http://www.guidelines.gov/)

**COLLAGE Communities On-line Learning About Guidelines**

<http://vaww.collage.research.med.va.gov/cgi-bin/collage/>, is a VA website focusing on the implementation of clinical practice guidelines, created by VERDICT: Veterans Evidence-based Research Dissemination Implementation Center  
<<http://www.verdict.uthscsa.edu/verdict/default.htm>.

**International Network of Agencies for Healthcare Technology Assessment** is a key resource for HTA reports and activities worldwide. Sharing reports from different countries allows VA TAP to reduce unnecessary duplication of activities. All VA TAP reports incorporate the INAHTA checklist as a means for quality and consistency across HTA reports. <<http://www.inahta.org/>

**Quality Measures Clearinghouse at AHRQ** VHA quality measures are listed in this public repository for evidence-based quality measures and measure sets. To learn more about the key components of this site and other user-friendly features, visit  
<<http://www.qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/>

**Evidence4U** Developed in the UK at the University of Manchester, Evidence4u is a web-based module designed to help you practice evidence-based healthcare by showing you how to find evidence, appraise it, and apply it to your everyday practice.  
<<http://www.evidence4u.org.uk/>>

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